

Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20554

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In the Matter of

Streamlining the Commission's
Rules and Regulations for Satellite
Application and Licensing Procedures

IB Docket No. 95-117

MCI COMMENTS

MCI Telecommunications Corporation (MCI) hereby submits its comments in response to the Commission's Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM), released August 11, 1995, FCC 95-285, in the above-captioned matter. The Commission is requesting comments on proposals to "streamline" application and licensing procedures and requirements for satellite space and earth stations under Part 25 of its rules.¹ MCI generally supports the proposals in the NPRM and lauds the Commission's efforts to eliminate unnecessary regulatory requirements and to reduce paperwork. However, as outlined below, MCI is concerned that the practical consequences of several of the proposals may be counterproductive.

INTRODUCTION

A number of advances in satellite technology have occurred over the past several years that were not contemplated when the Commission last conducted a comprehensive review of Part 25. These have precipitated this proceeding in which, among other

¹ 47 C.F.R. Sec. 25.

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things, the Commission would remove the construction permit requirement for space stations, relax rules governing space station licensee reports, eliminate application requirements for inclined orbit operation, modify license renewal rules for temporary fixed earth stations (C-band Transportables) and Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT) earth stations, and eliminate the requirement for the receipt of prior authorization of minor earth station modifications. The Commission has invited comments on these and other proposed changes with a view toward "streamlining" licensing and reporting requirements.²

SATELLITES OPERATING IN INCLINED ORBITS MUST OBTAIN PRIOR
FREQUENCY CO-ORDINATION

The Commission is seeking comment on a proposal that would allow licensees to begin satellite operations in inclined orbits without obtaining prior Commission authorization, but would require these licensees to "update their frequency coordination."³ MCI supports this proposal, with the understanding that frequency co-ordination would be required prior to permitting satellite operations in inclined orbits. The 6 GHz band uplinking to satellites is shared on a co-primary basis with "point-to-point" or "terrestrial" microwave radio services, operating in accordance with Part 21 of the Commission's rules. A change in a satellite orbit can also

² NPRM, para. 14.

³ Id. para. 16.

change the pointing angle of an associated earth station. In turn, this can cause interference with terrestrial microwave radio systems, or visa versa. Hence, prior frequency co-ordination in accordance with Sections 21.100(d) and 25.255 of the Commission's rules is essential.⁴

PROMPT, PRIOR COMMISSION NOTIFICATION MUST BE REQUIRED OF
C-BAND TRANSPORTABLE OPERATIONS

MCI is generally supportive of the Commission's proposals for license renewal of C-band Transportables. The proposal that would require C-band Transportable operators to provide notice of their activities to a central Commission office is particularly important,⁵ as a central point of notification would improve the ability of the Commission and interested persons to track C-band Transportable operations. MCI also agrees, for the reasons previously mentioned, that it is essential for the Commission to continue to require frequency co-ordination prior to the operation of any C-band Transportable.⁶ The listing of a Commission facsimile number, as proposed, should expedite the notification process.⁷ MCI agrees with the proposal that, prior to commencing C-band Transportable operations, operators should notify the Commission and all licensees of terrestrial facilities

⁴ 47 C.F.R. Sec. 21.100(d), Sec. 25.255.

⁵ NPRM at para. 18.

⁶ Id. at para. 18.

⁷ Proposed rule, Sec. 25.277.

lying within coordination contours of proposed C-band Transportables.⁸ However, in order to provide interested parties with as much time as possible to anticipate potential frequency interference problems, MCI suggests that the Commission also require a would-be C Band Transportable operator to promptly provide notice to the Commission and potentially affected microwave licensees, after the operator has made a decision that it will be offering service.

THE COMMISSION SHOULD REVIEW EARTH STATION LOCATION CHANGES OF ONE SECOND OR MORE

In principle, MCI agrees with the proposal that when frequencies of other communications systems would not be affected by slight modifications of earth stations, notice to the Commission should be required only after these modifications have been made.⁹ However, MCI believes that the proposed location change standard of 10 seconds (in either latitude or longitude) for earth stations operating in the Ku-band is not a reasonable one for distinguishing between "major" and "minor" earth station modifications. It is critical that the Commission develop a meaningful standard here to make this distinction since frequency co-ordination procedures should continue to be followed for earth station changes that could potentially interfere with other operators, while frequency co-ordination is unnecessary for minor

⁸ Id.

⁹ NPRM at para 23.

modifications of no real consequence to others. Typically, earth station modifications of less than one second in either latitude or longitude will not have a significant effect on the potential for interference to other users of those frequencies. However, earth station modifications can, as previously noted, have a significant effect on terrestrial microwave systems. Because the potential for frequency interference increases significantly with changes in earth stations of one second or more, the Commission should require frequency co-ordination for changes of this magnitude.

OTHER MATTERS WILL REQUIRE COMMISSION ACTION

MCI agrees that the Commission should adopt Adjacent Satellite Interference Analysis (ASIA) as the standard program for analyzing frequency interference, but believes that this database is too important to be updated only "when there is a new processing round."¹⁰ Because the data must be relatively current for interference analyses, MCI submits that the database should be updated at least once a year. It is also recommended that the Commission require that all information essential to performing frequency and sensitivity analyses be made publicly available. Confidential treatment of information should be limited to commercial information having no impact on engineering and sensitivity analyses.

MCI supports the proposal to reduce reporting for space

¹⁰ Id.

stations operators from twice to once per year.¹¹ If, as the Commission proposes, reports were to be due on June 30th of each year, MCI suggests that the Commission also specify that report information be current up to March 30th of the report year. This would require that data be sufficiently current for meaningful analysis of on-going operations but would minimize preparation problems presented by the need to collect data during the weeks immediately prior to the report deadline.

While MCI supports an extension beyond the current 48 months allowed for VSAT licensees to complete construction of their networks,¹² MCI opposes elimination of the requirement for VSAT licensees to report to the Commission, on a yearly basis, the number of VSAT stations actually constructed during the most recent twelve-month period.¹³ Since a detailed understanding of current VSAT satellite networks is essential and because "VSAT licensees will continue to build-out their systems aggressively,"¹⁴ it would not be unreasonable to require that licensees report annually on the number of new VSAT stations placed in operation

¹¹ Id. at para 13.

¹² Id. at para 19.

¹³ Id. at para 20.

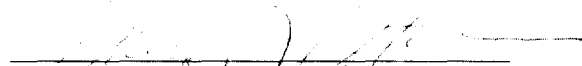
¹⁴ Id. at para 19.

CONCLUSION

WHEREFORE, MCI supports the Commission's proposed modifications to Part 25 of its rules, subject to the modifications discussed herein.

Respectfully,

By:



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October 4, 1995

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Hilary Soldati, do hereby certify that the foregoing
"COMMENTS" was served this 4th day of October, 1995, by hand
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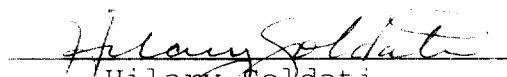
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